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GEOGRAPHIC INTELLIGENCE REPORT

CUBA

PART XIII: ARMED FORCES



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NO CHANGE IN CLASS. TO
NEXT REVIEW DATE: 9-22-79
AUTH: 100-700
DATE: 9-22-79
REVIEWER: 372044
C/187

CIA/FR CR L-60-1, Part XIII

January 1960

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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CONTENTS

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

	<u>Page</u>
1. Army	1
2. Air Force	4
3. Navy	7

SKETCH

Cuba: Naval Districts	9
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MAP

Following Page

Cuba, Territorial Organization and Unit Dispositions of the Cuban Army, 20 November 1959	10
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CUBA

PART XIII: ARMED FORCES

1. Army*

The Revolutionary Army of Cuba, as of November 1959, consisted of the Ground Forces, the Rural Police, and the Army Air Force. The tactical and territorial organization of the Ground Forces included a General Staff, three Fuerzas Tácticas de Combate (Tactical Combat Forces), Groupment "A" (a parachute regiment and antiaircraft battalion), a Signal Corps, an Engineer Corps, and Medical, Veterinary, and Judicial Services. In the opinion of the U.S. Army Attache stationed in Cuba, none of the above has the necessary supporting administrative or technical services to permit anything but the most haphazard combat operations. It should be noted, however, that one-third of the present strength of the Revolutionary Army has had extensive training and experience in guerrilla operations.

The six Rural Police Regiments are constabulary rather than combat troops. Except for the regimental reserves, organized as understrength infantry companies but called "Military Police Companies", their forces are dispersed in small, widely scattered cuartels throughout Cuba and are engaged in police duties. The Rural Police Regiments, except for the reserve company in each regiment, are not trained to operate as units.

*See accompanying map, Cuba, Territorial Organization and Unit Dispositions of the Cuban Army.

Each Regiment has military and police jurisdiction over one of the six military districts, which embrace all of Cuba except the city of Havana. The latter is under the National Police, a force of approximately 7,000, most of whom are stationed in the capital city.

Strength figures carried by the U. S. Army Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence (dated 15 August 1959) are as follows:

Ground Forces: 25,000 Organized into 3 tactical forces, a provisional "Group", and various Hqs. Corps and Services. Each tactical force contains 1 Infantry Regiment, strength 1,876; 1 Artillery Battalion, strength 435; 1 Armored Battalion, strength 313; 1 Engineer Company, strength 125; 1 Signal Company, strength 98; usual service units. The provisional "Group" consists of parachutists and antiaircraft artillerymen; the one in existence has a strength of 1,697.

Rural Police: 9,600 7 regiments assigned to provinces.
Average regimental strength, 1,375.

The disposition of the Cuban Army as of November 1959 was as follows:

Army General Staff	Campo Libertad (formerly Campo Columbia)
MP Company of Presidential Palace	Havana
Corps of Engineers	Campo Libertad

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Signal Corps	Campo Libertad
Medical Corps	Campo Libertad
Veterinary Service	Campo Libertad
Judicial Service	Campo Libertad
Tactical Combat Force, Oriente	
Infantry Regiment	Santiago de Cuba
Tank Battalion	Santiago de Cuba
Artillery Battalion	Santiago de Cuba
Tactical Combat Force, Central	
Infantry Regiment	Santa Clara
Tank Battalion	Santa Clara
Artillery Battalion	Santa Clara
Tactical Combat Force, Occidental	
Infantry Regiment	Managua (Havana Province)
Tank Battalion	Managua (Havana Province)
Artillery Battalion	Managua (Havana Province)
Agrupación "A"	
Parachute Regiment	San José de las Lajas (Havana Province)
Antiaircraft Battalion	San Antonio de los Baños
Rural Police Regiment No.1, "Maceo"	Santiago de Cuba
Rural Police Regiment No.2, "Agramonte"	Camagüey
Rural Police Regiment No.3, "Leoncio Vidal"	Santa Clara
Rural Police Regiment No.4, "Placido"	Matanzas
Rural Police Regiment No.5, "Marti"	Vibora
Rural Police Regiment No.6, "Rius Rivera"	Pinar del Río

- 3 -

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2. Air Force

The Cuban air force, designated Cuban Rebel Air Force (CRAF) by the Castro regime, has been in a state of almost complete disorganization since the overthrow of the Batista government in January 1959. Originally under the Army, it became an autonomous force in March 1959, was returned to Army control in June 1959, and was scheduled to become autonomous again 60 days after a 16 October 1959 decree. Most of its former officers have been imprisoned or dismissed and many of its former enlisted personnel have also been dismissed or have deserted.

The CRAF has no organized operational units. It is estimated to have 84 aircraft, all propeller-driven with the exception of seven T-33 jets. The Cuban government has recently been negotiating with the British to acquire additional jets. Total personnel strength is unknown; trained pilots probably number less than 60, plus 16 in training in Mexico and several in Venezuela.

The dismissals, arrests, and desertions of skilled pilots and technicians have, of course, had a detrimental effect on the CRAF's operational capabilities. On 26 July 1959, the CRAF, assisted by civil airline pilots, managed to get 29 aircraft into the air for a fly-by to celebrate the first anniversary of the Castro revolution. The aircraft consisted of 8 Sea Fury's, 9 B-26's, 4 T-33's, 2 F-47's, 4 C-47's, 1 C-54, and 1 C-46; this represented a maximum effort. The Sea Fury's and T-33's also participated in a strafing and dive-bombing demonstration, taking several hours to destroy a small fishing boat target.

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The air defense capability of the CRAF is slight. Cuba possesses no intercept type aircraft and has no early warning, ground control intercept, airborne intercept radar equipment, or antiaircraft artillery.

According to an August 1959 USAF report, personnel of the CRAF appeared to be divided among several different groups, each with its own objective. One group, composed mainly of former Cuban Army Air Force officers who were still acceptable to the rebels, appeared sincere in its desire to build up an efficient air force. Another group, composed mainly of revolutionaries, had no interest in organizational matters but only in guerrilla warfare, and was suspected of trying to encourage an expedition against one of the Caribbean "dictator" countries. Still another group had no interest in Air Force policy, organization, or objectives, but was merely interested in personal gain.

Cuba has no aircraft industry nor any capability to manufacture allied equipment or armament and, therefore, is dependent on foreign sources for logistic support. All aircraft, spare parts, armaments, electronic equipment, and fuels are imported. The amount of supplies on hand at present is unknown, but sufficient level of stocks was maintained by the former Cuban Army Air Force for a 60- to 90-day period of operation. Normally, Cuba has a 3-month supply of aviation

- 5 -

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Fuel on hand. Fuel storage (in underground tanks) at the two major operational military airfields is as follows:

Campo Libertad (Campo Columbia)	50,000 gallons 100/130
	20,000 gallons 91
Batista	10,000 gallons 100/130
	10,000 gallons JP-4

Most of the aircraft in the CRAF inventory are of U. S. manufacture. When the United States, approximately six months prior to the success of the Fidel Castro revolution, suspended military aid shipments to Cuba, the Batista regime purchased 17 Sea Fury's from British sources; 12 of these were delivered but 2 have since been lost. In addition, 3 C-46's, 2 B-26's, and 11 Tri-Pacers (PA-22's) were obtained from unknown sources. The inventory of CRAF aircraft, as of 15 December 1959, was as follows:

Basic Configuration	Model Designation	Inventory
Fighter/Bomber	Sea Furies, F-47, F-51	20
Lt/Tac/Attac Bomber	B-26	17
Transport	Mostly C-47's	15
Helicopter		12
Trainer		14
	7 T-33's	
	1 T-28's	
	6 AT-6's	
Miscellaneous		24
Total		102

Cuba has three airfields (one of which is a United State Navy airfield) with runways capable of accommodating all types of jet aircraft except medium and heavy bombers. In addition, there are

seven airfields with runways capable of accommodating most types of jet fighters. Parking and fuel facilities are generally limited at most of the airfields. For additional information on these and other airfields in Cuba, see Part XI, Transportation.

3. Navy

The Cuban Navy's functions are primarily of a coast guard nature with some small-scale antisubmarine warfare capability. Toward the end of the Batista regime, the Navy's limited number of ships were in almost constant use patrolling the coasts of Cuba for the purpose of intercepting clandestine shipments of arms to revolutionaries and to prevent the landing of agents. Consequently, by the time the Castro forces took over the government, the ships were in a poor material condition and badly in need of repair. Since the revolution, the ships have been kept active so that the Navy is now even less capable than during the Batista regime. In addition, the effectiveness of the Navy has been reduced because many trained officers and men have been dismissed, the United States Naval Training Mission has left Cuba, and the Cuban Navy is no longer able to purchase spare parts and other supplies in Miami, Florida, as had been the custom in the past.

The precise personnel strength of the Navy is not known, but estimates by the United States Office of Naval Intelligence indicate there were approximately 5,000 officers and men as of November 1959. The Navy, as of mid-summer 1959, had 48 surface ships: 6 patrol vessels (3 patrol escort--PF, 2 escort--PCE, 1 motor gunboat--PGM); 4 auxiliary vessels (AG 2, ATR 2); and 38 service craft (YAG 9, YP 29).

For purposes of command, vigilance, and combat use, the coasts of Cuba are divided into three naval districts. These are in turn subdivided into numerous naval posts and their subposts, which are in effect small coast guard stations. Each naval post is assigned a certain section of coastline and is responsible for search-and-rescue missions and for the enforcement of laws relating to smuggling and fishing regulations. Jurisdiction of each district includes the inlets, anchorages, rivers, keys, and islands within the limits. For legal purposes, jurisdictional or territorial waters are considered to be those surrounding the Republic of Cuba to a distance of three nautical miles, measuring from the low water line of either the mainland or Cuban cays or islands adjacent to the coast.*

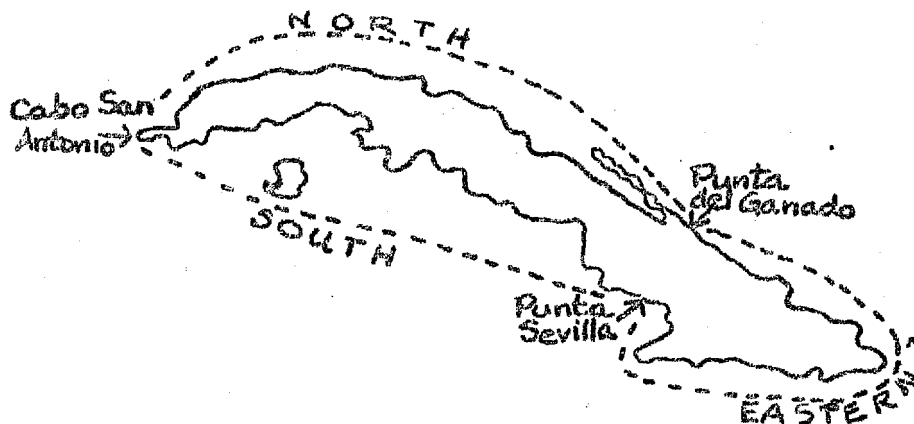
The North Naval District comprises the north coast between Cabo San Antonio (Provincia de Pinar del Rio) and Punta del Ganado (Provincia Camaguey). The headquarters of this district is located in Havana. The principal facilities of the Navy are located in Havana harbor, including the main repair facility of the Cuban Navy -- a small yard which can accomplish minor hull and engine repairs. Within this district are 17 naval posts and 43 subposts.

*It should be noted that the position of certain islands or cays may extend Cuban sovereignty well beyond three nautical miles measured from the mainland. Also, the Cuban government in 1955 defined "internal sea" as follows: "Waters situated between the coasts of the Island and the nearby islets are declared to be internal sea provided the distance between the one and the others and the distance between islets does not exceed 10 miles." There is the further consideration that Cuban naval patrols may not be concerned with the technicalities of the law, and will operate within their own ad hoc definitions of territorial water.

The South Naval District is comprised of the area of the south coast between Cabo San Antonio (Provincia de Pinar del Río) and Punta Sevilla (Provincia de Camagüey) including the coastline of the Isle of Pines. District headquarters are located in Cienfuegos, where a small naval station with very limited facilities is located. Within this district are 8 naval posts and 19 subposts.

The Eastern Naval District includes the area on the north and south coasts of the eastern end of the island between Punta del Ganado (Provincia de Camagüey) on the north and Punta Sevilla (Provincia de Camagüey) on the south coast. District headquarters are located in Santiago. Facilities at the small naval station maintained here are meager. There are 7 naval posts and 31 subposts in this district.

Cuba: Naval Districts



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The general control station of the naval communications network is located in the naval headquarters building in Havana. As of late 1956,* it was equipped with 6 radio transmitters and 12 radio receivers. The Navy yard, located across Havana harbor from naval headquarters, is equipped with 5 radio transmitters and one remote control system which make operation of its transmitters possible from naval headquarters, thus permitting the transmitters at naval headquarters to be kept as standbys and for emergency purposes. Communications watches are generally well maintained, and the communications system is considered one of the more dependable elements of the Cuban Navy. As of 1956, the naval communications system was reportedly to be complemented soon by a new microwave communications system which was being installed in Cuba by the Radio Corporation of America.

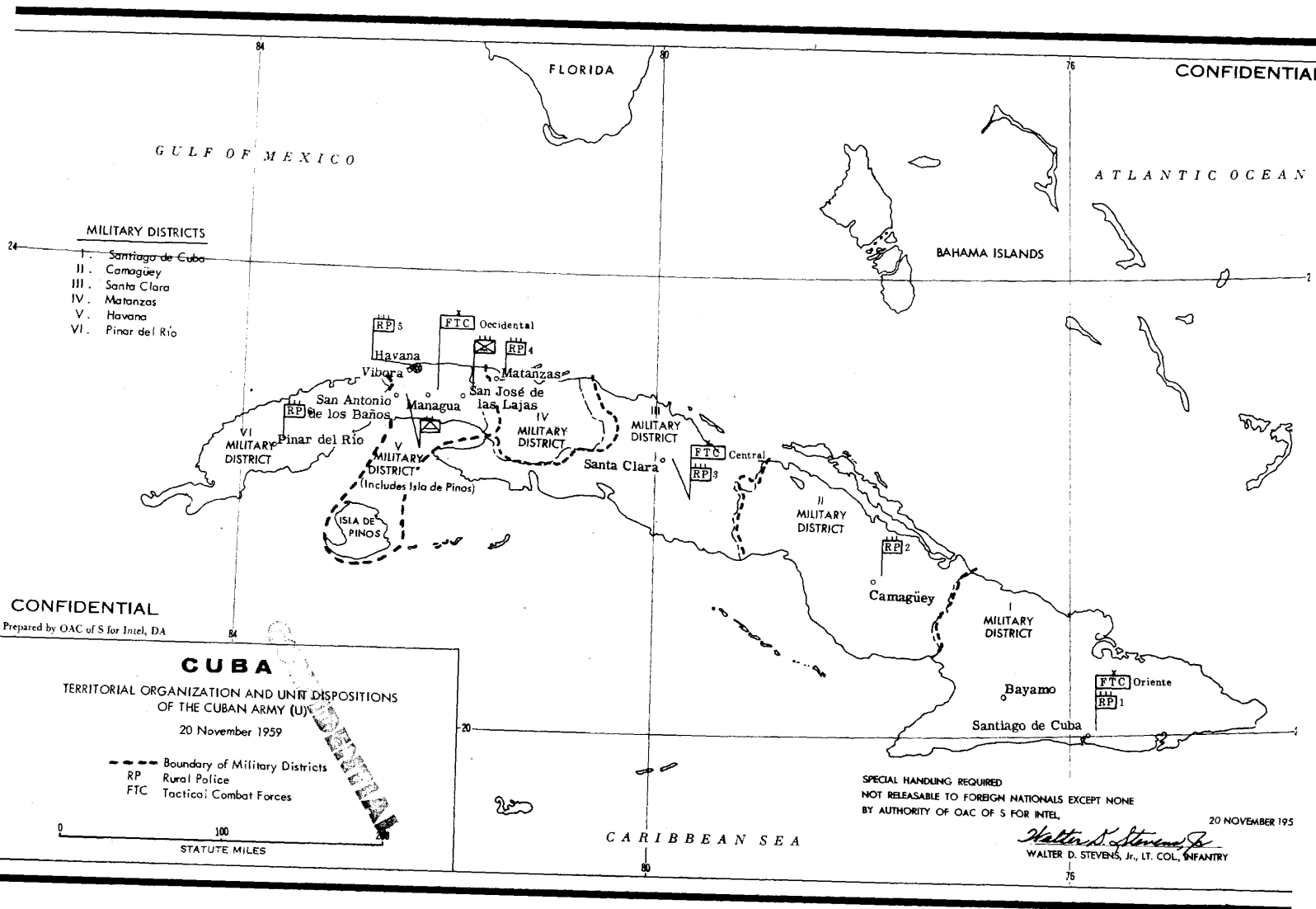
The Maritime Police, a civilian corps attached to the Navy for administrative purposes, has the mission of maintaining public order in maritime zones, port areas, navigable rivers, and other areas which may be specifically assigned. It is charged with the task of ensuring obedience to laws and regulations with regard to navigation, fishing, and the internal order of ports. The Maritime Police aid the Navy in all its port functions. A December 1959 estimate placed the strength of the Maritime Police at between 375 and 400 officers and men.

*Information based primarily on material dated November 1956; in December 1959, however, personnel of ONI noted that the information was still essentially correct.

- 10 -

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